

Hanoi party leader to resign

HANOI (AP) — Vietnamese Communist Party Secretary-General Nguyen Van Linh will resign at a forthcoming party meeting, Vietnamese officials told Reuters Wednesday. Officials said Linh, who is 74 and has been ill since late October, would step down from the party's top post for health reasons at a plenum of its central committee. They said the meeting would be held within two months. "He is the old. There will be a party plenum after tet (Vietnam's lunar new year)," said Bui Tin, deputy chief editor of the Communist Party daily Nhan Dan. He said Nguyen's health was worsened by decided illness. The three-day tet holiday starts January 27. One Hanoi European diplomat said: "He has to step down because of his health. If they want to make the Communist Party stronger, they need another leader." Vietnamese officials in Hanoi said Linh, backed as a strongman in the mould of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev when he was elected party general secretary in late 1986, has been ill since catching a severe cold during a visit to East Germany last October.

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PLO rebels offer reunification

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian-backed Palestinian dissidents are considering a proposal for reunification with Yasir Arafat's mainstream Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) after a seven-year feud, a senior official said Wednesday. Khaled Faizan, chairman of the Palestine National Salvation Front, a loose coalition of dissidents who had sought Arafat's ouster, PLO chairman, said: "I have presented an initiative to reconcile all Palestinian factions under the PLO." He told reporters the three leaders of the PNSF groups — Saed Meesa of the self-styled Patriotic Command; and Iyman Kadi, head of Salqa — "have agreed to study my proposal and give me their replies as soon as possible." Salqa and the PFLP-GC have been suspended from the PLO which groups seven other factions. The PFLP-GC has been blamed for the mid-air explosion of the Pan Am jumbo jet over Scotland in December 1988, in which 270 people were killed. Jibril, a former Syrian army captain backed by Libya, has denied the charge. Faizan did not disclose details of his initiative.

Hamas leader goes on trial

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — The wheelchair-bound leaders of the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement went on trial in a military court Wednesday and relatives of a slain Israeli soldier shrieked curses at him.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, 54, was charged with 15 offences, including belonging to an illegal organisation, organising attacks on civilians and causing the deaths of two Israeli soldiers, Ilan Saadon and Avi Sasportas.

"I deny all charges," Yassin whispered to reporters in the courtroom in Gaza city in the occupied Gaza Strip.

However, his lawyer, Abdul Malik Bahamie, told the court that Yassin founded Hamas and helped transfer funds to the organisation.

"My client says it is not just his right but his obligation to establish these organisations to battle the occupation," Bahamie said. "He's also not sorry for what he did."

"Jews and Arabs should live together in peace," Yassin told reporters as he was pushed in a wheelchair into court.

Hamas was founded within a month after the Palestinian uprising against occupation began in December 1987.

Government officials did not

move quickly against Hamas, apparently believing it would take away support from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Hamas was declared illegal last September, and Yassin was arrested in November.

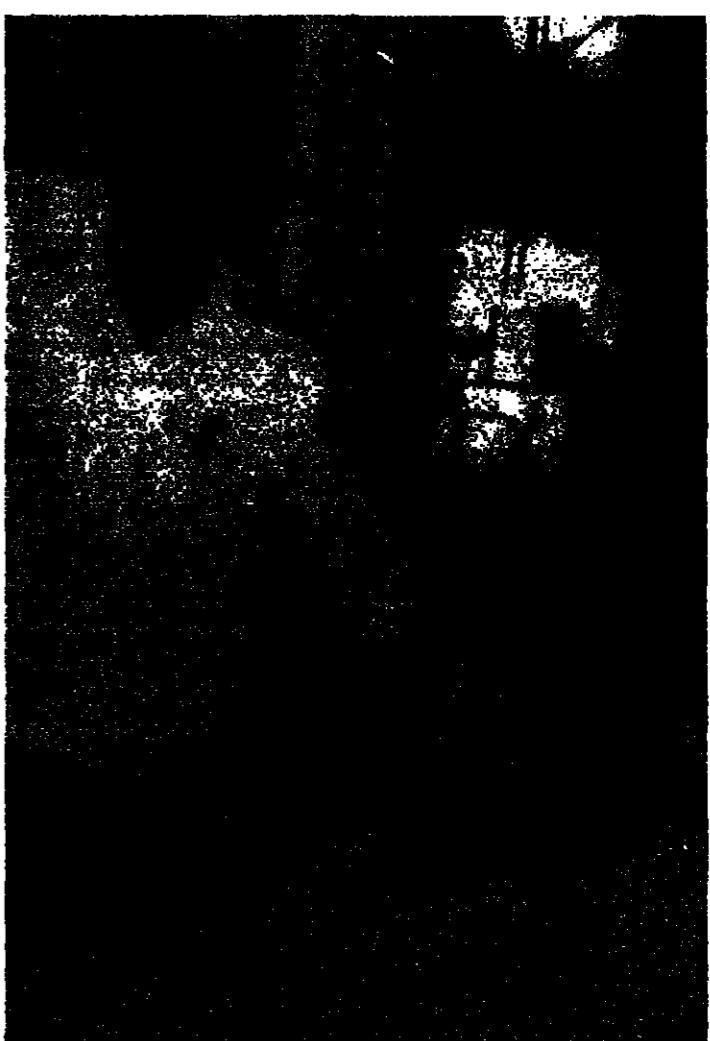
Yassin's lawyers told the court that they will contest several points in the charges. They were granted an indefinite postponement after requesting time to study the charges fully. Israel Radio said the trial was expected to last two months.

The bearded Yassin, paralysed since a childhood sporting accident, sat impassively through Wednesday's session despite repeated outbursts from the family of Saadon.

Yassin has a long history of scrapes with the law as a Muslim spiritual leader. He was jailed by Egypt while Gaza was under its control and was convicted in 1984 of trying to overthrow Israel and replace it with an Islamic state.

He was sentenced to 13 years in prison, but was later released in an exchange of Arab prisoners for Israelis held in Lebanon.

Officials have said they believe those who carried out the slaying of Saadon have fled Israeli-controlled territory, but about 200 of Yassin's followers are being tried separately on charges similar to those against him.



Marisa Mannot del Pinto is attended by an orderly in hospital after losing her eye at a peace rally in occupied Jerusalem. Part of a large Italian delegation, Mrs. Del Pinto's husband told a press conference that his wife was struck in the eye when a water cannon fired by the Israeli police shattered the window of their hotel.

Israel contends response to uprising is reasonable

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Israeli government contended Wednesday that the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories resulted in "continual assault" on soldiers and civilians and that the army's actions in controlling it were reasonable.

The statement, prepared by the justice ministry, came in response to an Amnesty International report saying it feared the Israeli government has condoned and even encouraged the illegal killing of unarmed Palestinians.

"We are concerned that taken together these factors appear to add up to more than just tolerance of serious abuses and amount to real encouragement of them," the human rights organisation said.

The ministry statement said that Israel "is attempting to abide by the rules of international law and moral conduct in an area of the world where few other players

more than 4,000 Israeli soldiers and civilians were hurt.

The justice ministry's statement said that "Israeli soldiers and civilians find themselves under continual assault, threatened daily by stones, nail-studded potatoes, concrete blocks, petrol bombs, knives and occasional gunfire."

The report said that "the violent nature of the uprising necessitates a response which entails the use of force."

It noted that there were strict firing rules and orders that unauthorised use of force has been punished.

In its newsletter, the London-based Amnesty International called for an urgent review of the firearms guidelines, and said Israel's highest authorities must make clear to all law enforcement official that abuses will not be tolerated.

Noriega's Israeli aide tipped off of assault

PANAMA CITY (R) — An Israeli adviser of deposed Panamanian General Manuel Antonio Noriega was tipped off some six hours ahead of last month's U.S. invasion, according to one of the leaders of Panama's new security force.

Mike Harrari, 62, a former officer of Israel's Mossad secret intelligence service and for years a close Noriega associate, was in the home of Noriega's wife Felicia the night of Dec. 15, according to Lieutenant Colonel Eduardo Herrera.

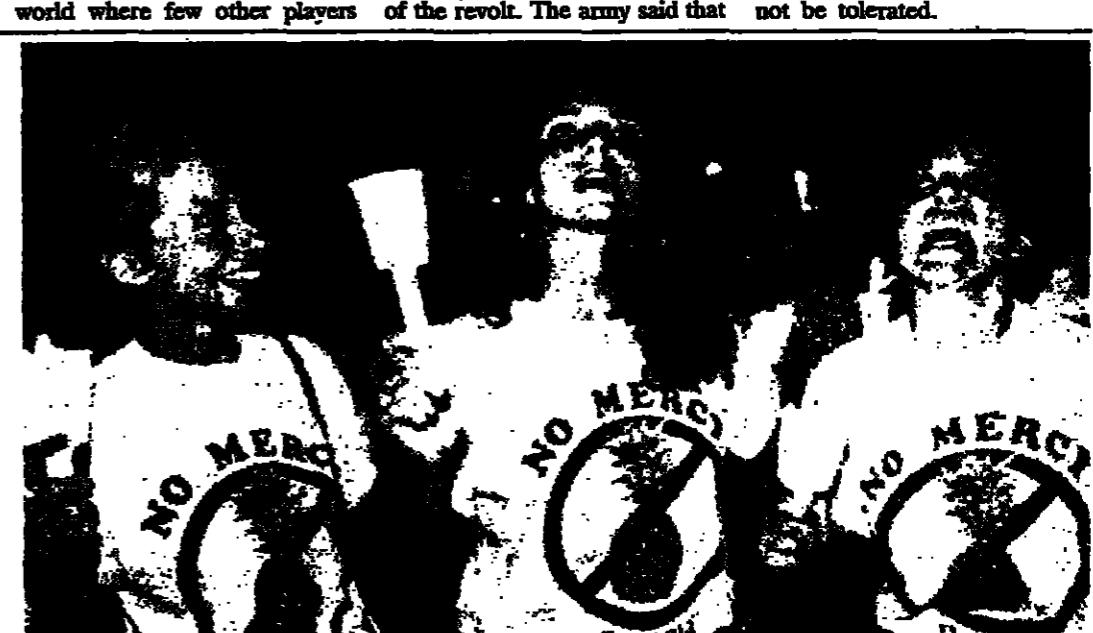
Herrera, who has been named by the new government as second in command of the new security force that replaced Noriega's Panama Defence Force (PDF), said the information was provided from Noriega's chamber.

Sgt. Zamora, who was also in the house that night, American forces invaded in the early hours of Dec. 20.

Zamora told U.S. and Panamanian authorities that two unidentified Israelis appeared at Noriega's home in the luxury Altos de Golf neighbourhood at about 7 p.m. and spoke to Harrari in Hebrew, Herrera told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Harrari told those present that "something was going to happen," and left, the driver reported. The U.S. attack came six hours later, at 1 a.m.

Noriega has been holed up in the Vatican embassy in Panama City since December 24, four



Panama City protesters wear shirts and headbands reading Manuel Noriega, derisively known as "pineapple" face.

U.S. may allow third country asylum for Noriega

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The White House, in an apparent policy shift, refused Wednesday to rule out letting deposed Panamanian strongman Manuel Antonio Noriega seek asylum in some third country.

"We've never said no third country. What we have said is we want him to come back to the United States (to stand trial) but we're not going to rule out every other alternative," spokesman Marin Fitzwater said.

Noriega has been holed up in the Vatican embassy in Panama City since December 24, four

days after a U.S. invasion drove him from power. The United States wants him tried on drug-trafficking charges but the Vatican has so far refused to hand him over.

Fitzwater's comments seemed to open the door to a deal that could break the standoff with the Vatican embassy.

However, Fitzwater later told reporters he did not mean to suggest any change in the U.S. position.

"There is no shift. We want him (Noriega) back," he said.

"Our attitude is this is a matter

King: Moves under way for proclamation of national pact

AMMAN (Petra) — Practical steps are under way for the proclamation of a national charter which will constitute the best guarantee for national unity in Jordan and a source of strength for the Kingdom, His Majesty King Hussein said Wednesday.

The proposed charter will also ensure continued endeavours for the welfare of all people in Jordan, enhancing unity with the Jordanian family, King Hussein said at a meeting held at the Royal Court with leaders of the Christian communities in Jordan and occupied Palestine.

"We are keen on safeguarding our national unity, which has always served as the most effective element fusing Jordanians, Palestinians, Muslims and Christians at all levels," the King said.

"This has always been Jordan's declared policy and will continue to be in the future," the King added.

King Hussein said he was pleased to meet with the heads of the Christian communities, in whom he takes deep pride, and said that he was strongly committed to the great principles of the Kingdom's founders who observed their word to attain unity and pledged continued efforts to defend Arab rights in Holy Jerusalem and other parts of the Arab lands.

King Hussein expressed his

Weizman heads for Moscow after crisis

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Science Minister Ezer Weizman left Israel Wednesday for a seven-day visit to the Soviet Union planned before he was forced to quit the government's decision-making inner cabinet for alleged contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Weizman was at the centre of a controversy that nearly brought down the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, but the 65-year-old Weizman said before departing from Ben-Gurion airport: "As far as I am concerned, the 72-hour crisis is over."

The centre-left Labour Party threatened to quit the coalition with Shamir's right-wing Likud bloc after Shamir announced Sunday that he was firing Weizman, a Labourite. But the crisis was defused Tuesday when Weizman agreed to resign from the inner cabinet and Shamir withdrew the order to dismiss him as science minister.

Weizman has urged Israel to negotiate with the PLO. He admitted having contacts with the PLO, but added that his efforts

(Continued on page 3)

Aoun aide escapes assassination attempt

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Unknown assailants attacked the house belonging to the chief of military police in the Christian enclave, Wednesday in an apparent assassination attempt that killed at least five people, police said.

The military police chief, Lieutenant-Colonel Adel Sassis, escaped unharmed as his guards battled off the attackers at his house in the mountain resort town of Beit Meri, a police spokesman said.

It was the first such assault on a senior aide to Michel Aoun since the general rebelled in November against Syrian-backed President Elias Hrawi's internationally recognised government of national reconciliation.

A communiqué from Aoun's command said among the five killed in the attack were four soldiers guarding the house in Beit Meri, 15 kilometres east of Beirut.

The communiqué identified the fifth casualty as Saliba Yousef, a Christian, whom whose bullet

Efforts boosted to break oil slick off Morocco

RABAT (Agencies) — Hundreds of clean-up workers on ships and aircraft struggled Wednesday to break up a 200-square-kilometre oil slick menacing the Moroccan coast.

In Paris, French Environment Minister Brice Lalonde said the crippled Iranian supertanker that unleashed the spill continues to pose a serious threat to marine life.

The Moroccan navy mobilised a frigate and seven patrol boats to keep an eye on the spill and lay floating barriers to keep the slick at bay along a 350-kilometre front from the rich fishing grounds of Safi north to Casablanca, the official news agency said.

Hrawi was quoted Wednesday by the independent Beirut newspaper Al Nahar as saying he plans to talk to Damascus for talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad "shortly." He set no specific date.

But Al Nahar said the visit was expected to take place sometime

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Middle East News

Turkey may reduce size of military

By John Owen-Davies
Reuter

ANKARA — Turkey may reduce the size of its armed forces in the light of East-West developments but plans to push ahead with an ambitious military modernisation programme, defence officials said.

"After there is agreement at the CFE (conventional forces in Europe) talks it is possible we may reduce our forces," General Necip Torunay, chief of Turkey's general staff, told Reuters.

He did not indicate any possible size of cut in the 660,000-strong armed forces, which guard one third of NATO's frontiers with Warsaw Pact countries and are the largest in the alliance after the United States.

Western military sources said Turkey, which borders the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Iran, Iraq, Syria and NATO-ally Greece, could afford a cut of up to 150,000 men.

"Such a cut would not affect Turkey's combat capability," one source said.

"There are quite a few troops, sailors and airmen doing tasks such as shoe-cleaning and waiting at officers' clubs."

The 23-nation CFE talks in Vienna, trying to negotiate force reductions from the Atlantic to the Urals, are widely expected to end in agreement later this year.

Troop reduction is a sensitive issue in Turkey where about one-in-five of its 18-million civilian workers are unemployed.

Some opposition parliamentarians, who frequently point with

concern to three military interventions in domestic politics between 1960 and 1980, want reductions and facilities earmarked for military construction to be used for civilian purposes.

But officials said Turkey, still using some World War II vintage warships and 40-year-old U.S.-designed battle tanks, would continue a \$10-billion drive for modern equipment, including armoured vehicles and U.S.-designed F-16 fighter jets.

"Greece is the only democratic country among our neighbours. You cannot know who will do that, and when," Defence Minister Sefa Geyi told reporters this week.

Parliament last week approved a calendar 1990 defence budget equivalent to \$3.4 billion, double last year's figure and about 13 per cent of the total national budget.

Giray, of the centre-right Motherland Party which has held office since three years of army rule ended in 1983, appeared to rule out any quick reduction in the armed forces.

"While Turkey sees a possible threat of threats from Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, it remains intensely concerned about security in the rugged southeast where separatist Kurds, some based in Iran and Syria, have been fighting since mid-1984.

The southeast, also bordering CFE talks.

Turkey lags behind both Syria and Iraq, both of which are viewed as potential enemies, in terms of some major equipment.

It has 3,700 tanks and 412 combat aircraft, compared with 4,000 tanks and 478 aircraft in Syria and 4,500 tanks and around 500 aircraft in Iraq, according to the IISS.

Conscripts and reservists are considered a breed apart from the elite officer corps, whose members see themselves as guardians of the democratic and secularist ideas set out by modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kamal Ataturk.

Turks under the age of 32 working outside the country can avoid all but two months of conscription by paying the state the equivalent of about \$6,000.

Turkey, with a population of 55 million people, also has 951,000 reservists aged up to 46 years, some of whom spend a couple of weeks a year at military camps.

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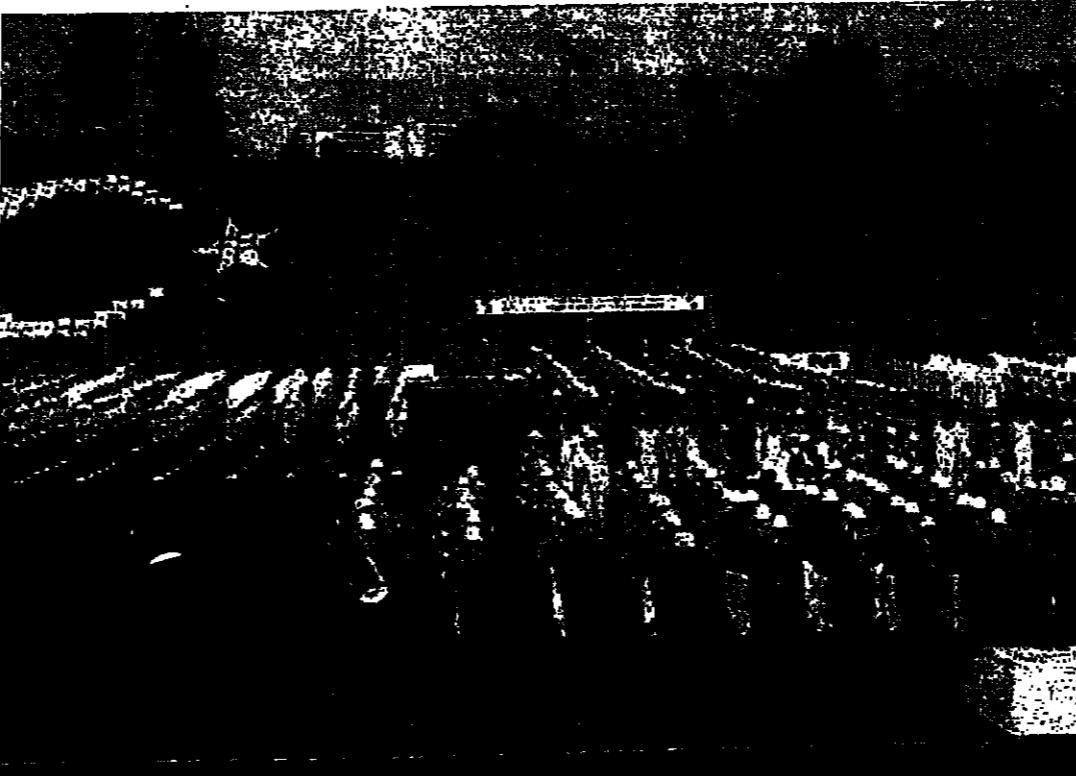
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Turkish military stage a ceremonial parade (file photo)

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 1990

Sudanese doctor's death sentence said suspended

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's ruler has suspended a death sentence imposed on a doctor for leading the first strike against the military regime in Khartoum, two reports said Wednesday.

The judgement issued Dec. 10 that Dr. Maamoun Mohammad Hussein should hang triggered protests from the United States and other Western nations as well as Arab officials.

Omar Hassan Al Bashir, who headed a June 30 coup that overthrew civilian government in Sudan, has vowed not to interfere with his military courts and not to commute death sentences they issue.

But Makram Mohammad Ahmad, editor of the weekly magazine Al Mursawar who is known as a confidant of President Hosni Mubarak, mentioned the suspension in a lengthy article on Sudan after six months of military rule.

"The decision taken by Lt.-Gen. Al Bashir to suspend the death sentence on the leader of the Sudanese doctors' union opens the way to the return of the professional and trade unions to resume their role," Ahmad wrote, without naming a source.

Political parties, unions and professional associations were among the first casualties of the military regime, banned by one of Bashir's early edicts.

The government has struck harshly against people who violated martial law rules. It executed one young man convicted of dealing in the foreign-currency black market, another for selling drugs. Two others convicted for illegal dealings in foreign currency are presently on death row along with Hussein.

Khartoum last Sunday to cancel the death sentence issued against Dr. Maamoun Mohammad Hussein.

Mubarak visited Sudan last Sunday, in connection with Sudan's 33rd anniversary of independence on Jan. 1, and held talks with Bashir.

Except for Bashir's early commands that the sentence would stand, the Sudanese government has refused to elaborate on the imprisoned doctor's fate. Reports circulated in Khartoum that he died under torture, but a government spokesman denied that. Other reports had him secretly executed, and still others that his death sentence was commuted.

Hussein was accused of leading a week-long strike by doctors in late November, the first work stoppage faced by the military government. Because he chaired the meeting at which the strike was declared, he was sentenced to hang. Another doctor received a 15-year prison term.

Labour activity leading to civil unrest have brought down two previous military governments in Sudan, including the 16-year reign of pro-Western dictator Jaafar Numeiri in April 1985.

Thus, Bashir's junta immediately decreed strikes illegal and punishable by death.

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Bulgarian party under heavy pressure over Turks

KURDZHALI, Bulgaria (R) —

Bulgaria's domestic row over its Turkish minority has put new pressure on the embattled Communist Party as it prepares to relinquish the power it has held unchallenged for 40 years.

Thousands of angry Bulgarians chanted anti-Turkish songs in this southern town Tuesday in protest at a decision by the party to restore the minority's rights, including the use of their Turkish names.

The former leadership under Todor Zhivkov, who was ousted in a purge in November, forced ethnic Turks to assume Bulgarian names and restricted their right to practise their Muslim faith.

About 10,000 Bulgarian protesters, shouting "Bulgaria is not Cyrus" and "Turks in Turkey," gathered in freezing temperatures and called on the reformist Communist leadership to resign.

Senior politburo member Andri Lukanov travelled specially to the town to try to ease the situation, bringing an appeal for national reconciliation.

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gion close to the border with Turkey.

The party prepared for round-table talks with opposition groups Wednesday to seek a consensus on moving to a multi-party democratic following increasing popular protest and a series of token strikes across Bulgaria last week.

The Union of Democratic Forces, the strongest opposition force embracing nine independent groups, said in a statement reported by BTA it would not consider power-sharing with the Communists after multi-party elections due to be held by June.

The Communist Party had said it was prepared to consider a post-election coalition, but the union statement said there were no plans to consider "participation in a coalition government with already discredited totalitarian structures."

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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Aden says more reforms needed for unity

ABU DHABI (R) — South Yemen's Prime Minister Yasmeen Said No'man was quoted Wednesday as saying a planned merger with North Yemen needed more democratic reforms. "We feel that continuation of reforms is the only way to achieve unity," he told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Khaleej newspaper.

"To ensure a guaranteed approach to unity, we have to intensify moves for democracy and reforms," No'man said. Leaders of North and South Yemen signed a draft constitution in Aden in November 30, 1989, setting a one-year timetable for unification in a multi-party state. South Yemen has already begun moves towards political pluralism after years of one-party rule. North Yemen has no political parties. North Yemen's Foreign Minister Abdu Karim Al Iryani said in remarks published Tuesday that Marxism is an alien creed and stressed that plans to unite the countries included multi-party politics. Aden's Marxism "was a constant danger for the neighbouring (political) systems of the region," Iryani said.

"The new unified constitution stresses democracy ... and commits itself to parliamentary rule where everyone has the right to choose his representatives," he said.

Saudia plane stuck in mud in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — A Boeing 747 of the Saudi airline Saudia has been stuck in mud at the end of a runway at Tunis airport since a mistimed landing last Sunday, civil aviation source said Wednesday. The plane, on a flight from Jeddah to Casablanca via Tunis, touched down two far along the runway and ran off the end, they said. There were no injuries among the passengers and little damage to the aircraft, they added. Tunisian engineers and specialists called in from abroad by Saudia were trying to free the 200-tonne plane Wednesday.

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Editor-in-Chief:

DR. WALEED M. SADI

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171-6, 670141-4, 684311, 684366

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 661242

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Israel getting away with murder

AMNESTY International is a highly reputable human rights organisation that has earned very high marks in monitoring and exposing grave and systematic human rights violations. Its credibility is beyond reproach and its findings have been recognised around the world as being very precise. And when this prestigious human rights organisation confirms in its special January newsletter that the Israeli government has effectively condoned and encouraged extrajudicial execution of Palestinians by its occupying forces to put down their intifada, then the international community is duty bound to take this revelation most seriously and start doing something about it. To begin with, the world should take notice of the true intentions of the Israeli government under Yitzhak Shamir as revealed by Amnesty International. And then the governments and peoples of all the countries concerned about the prospects of peace in the Middle East need to ask the question of how a government with a record of terrorism such as the one that now rules Israel can ever make peace with the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab states? The horror stories from the West Bank and Gaza Strip can never cease as long as Shamir and his kind are at the helm of responsibility in Israel. And if the crimes against humanity continue unabated in the occupied territories, then there is no way that negotiation for peace in the Middle East can ever get underway. Surely a government that is so contemptuous of international norms and deliberately and with premeditation and malice kills Palestinians right and left as established by Amnesty International cannot be expected to have the will or the psychology to wage peace with the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab states in the Middle East.

Seen against this backdrop, the findings of Amnesty International must be viewed as an added evidence that Tel Aviv is not and can never be a serious interlocutor for peace in the Middle East and all efforts must be exerted to get rid of Shamir's government as presently constituted. Of course it is up to the Israeli people to do something about their government and it is only the Israelis who can effectively force a change of course in their government's politics. But the international community also has many cards to play as well, be it economic, military or political. If for example the allies of Israel, especially the U.S., can ever be persuaded to respect the findings of Amnesty International and other international tribunals and institutions on Israeli practices and policies, and act accordingly, the days of Shamir and his like could become numbered. But as long as Washington and other Western capitals keep on paying lip service to the cause of peace in the Middle East, Shamir will only interpret such a tolerant stance as an encouragement to keep on floundering international norms and practices, in which case there will never be a chance for peace in the Middle East. The pressing question then is whether the latest Amnesty International findings will have an impact on Washington and the rest of the Western world to start doing something concrete about Israel and its intransigent attitudes.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday called on Prime Minister Mudar Badran to consolidate his cabinet by involving representatives of various parliamentary blocs to serve in different portfolios. The paper said that the Islamists in Parliament coupled their vote of confidence in the government with a condition that it carry out certain reforms, perhaps hoping that Badran would select some of the Islamist deputies as members of his cabinet. The paper also referred to the position of the leftist group which, it said, proved to be divided, with some of the group supporting the government, others abstaining from the vote and the rest voicing opposition. The paper said that the leftists should unify their ranks and form a unified bloc if they want to have a say in parliamentary affairs and serve their constituents. The paper said the government can not deal with 80 different mentalities in Parliament, and it would be more convenient not only for the government but also for the political parties to have political blocs like the Muslim Brotherhood, dealing in groups with the government and in future state affairs. The paper said the leftists ought to group themselves into one bloc, capable of dealing with different issues and aiming to achieve their goals similar to the Muslim Brotherhood which is striving to carry out a programme promised to the electorate.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday pointed on accusing finger on the world Zionism and the United States for being behind the campaign launched in Romania against the Arab nation. Hosni Ayyash says that Ceausescu has been planted in the Eastern Socialist Bloc by Zionism and the United States, serving as their agent and serving their interest within the socialist camp. The writer says that soon after the dictator's execution the Israelis launched a campaign to distort the Arab nation's image by claiming that Arab forces and Palestinian elements were fighting on the side of the dictator's security forces which had opposed the revolution. Nothing could be further from the truth and none of these allegations had been proven, says the writer. Indeed, the Zionists and the Americans had been behind the hasty trial and execution of the dictator and behind the burning of the official documents in his possession lest they would reveal the fact that he had been a paid agent by world Zionism and the United States, the writer continues.

Sawt Al Sheab Arabic daily Wednesday said that Shamir's threats to dismiss Weizman was no more than a manoeuvre to gain time for his government and to stall, in a bid to kill the American five-point plan. The paper said that Shamir had to resort to anything and to any accusation levelled to any member of his government or his opponent with the hope of avoiding the planned Washington meeting with the United States and Egypt to discuss Baker's election plans for the occupied Arab territories.

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — Efforts are moving slowly to end the Arab-Israeli dispute and other Middle East conflicts, and the decline of hostilities between the superpowers could nudge the region toward greater stability in the 1990s.

Iran-Iraq peace negotiations have stalled. Both sides are reeling amid a growing proliferation of long-range missiles in the region.

This is eroding Israel's long-held technological superiority and heightening superpower concern about a new arms race, including nuclear and chemical weapons, in the volatile region.

The pace of the Arab-Israeli peace process is unlikely to gather momentum for some time, until Israel's right-wing prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, relaxes his hard-line position of refusing to negotiate with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

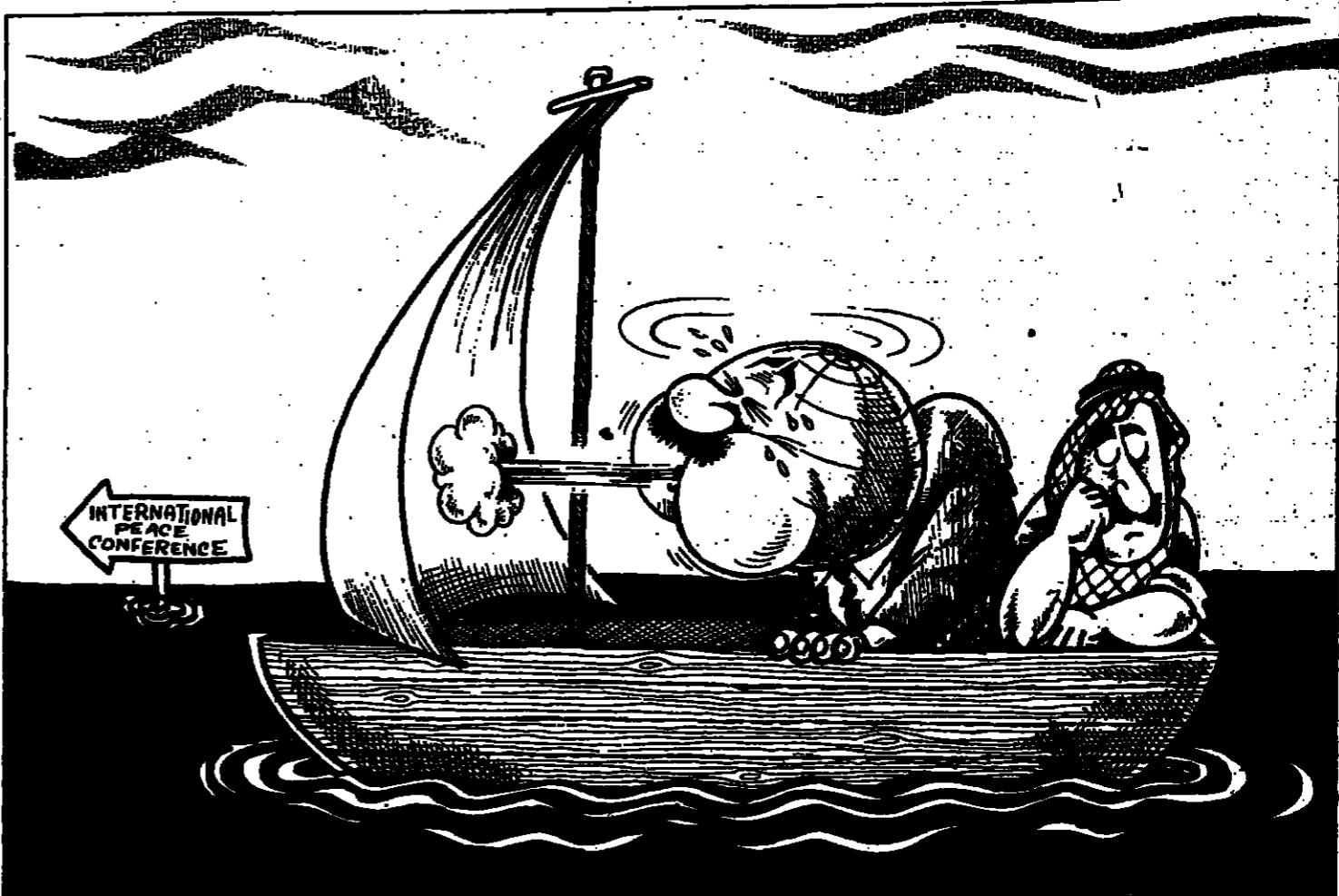
Many observers believe this is unlikely unless there is intense pressure from Washington. Shamir, at odds with a faction of his own Likud Party as well as with his Labour coalition partners, is in no position to start making concessions.

Egypt is expected to remain the crucial mediator between Israel — with whom it signed a peace treaty in 1979 — the Palestinians and other Arab states in trying to reach a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

This is most pronounced in Lebanon, the middle East's proxy battleground, where the Arab League was finally jolted into taking forceful action to end 14 years of civil war.

But the peace settlement it brokered has stalled because the army leader, Gen. Michel Aoun, rejects the pact, citing its failure to provide firm guarantees of a

Middle East — peace is still far off



A year-old dialogue with the United States has failed to result in Washington jarring any concessions from the Israelis. Failure to produce substantive results will leave Arafat exposed and his peace initiative discredited within the PLO.

Hard-liners such as George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have made clear their patience is running out.

The Arab-Israeli peace process, which has dragged on for more than 20 years with only Egypt's peace treaty to show for it, has a profound impact on the region's other conflicts.

This is most pronounced in Lebanon, the middle East's proxy battleground, where the Arab League was finally jolted into taking forceful action to end 14 years of civil war.

But the peace settlement it brokered has stalled because the army leader, Gen. Michel Aoun, rejects the pact, citing its failure to provide firm guarantees of a

Syrian withdrawal.

The Syrians, their efforts to pacify their unruly neighbour thwarted yet again by the Lebanese Falangists, are becoming frustrated and may yet move again.

Radical Syria, which needs Lebanon as a security buffer between itself and Israel, is likely to come under pressure from Moscow to moderate its stand on the overall Middle East settlement as

détente improves.

Moscow, increasingly crucial to the peace process after years of being edged out by Washington, is already seeking to persuade Syria to abandon its drive for military parity with Israel.

The Kremlin, increasingly con-

cerned with economic and social upheaval at home, has made clear that Syria must end its rifts with Iraq, Egypt and the PLO to achieve the long-elusive Arab unity that is prerequisite for an

international peace conference.

Iran, Syria's ostensible ally, also is in transition following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani, leader of the so-called pragmatists, as president last summer.

He seeks to open up Iran after a decade of isolation, attract Western investment and technology to revitalise the moribund economy following the 1988 ceasefire in the 8-year war with Iraq.

He is opposed by revolutionary hard-liners and much will depend on whether he can fend off the challenge and ease the economic hardships that Iran's 55 million population, growing at an alarming 3.5 per cent a year, is demanding.

If he can, one key consequence could be the release of Western hostages held by pro-Iranian militants in Lebanon and the removal of a major source of instability in the region.

Central America — peace, stability remain elusive

By Richard Herzfelder
The Associated Press

bring peace to the troubled countries of the region appeared to be in tatters.

Guerrillas and the government of El Salvador became further polarised. The rebels opened their biggest offensive of the civil war in November by attacking San Salvador and targets in all 14 provinces.

Peace prospects appeared even more uncertain in Nicaragua, even with an upcoming election. Although the United States and Soviet Union have become less interested in proxy wars, the lack of democratic tradition in Nicaragua, coupled with social divi-

sions and poverty, argued against quick solutions.

Here is a look at the region from north to south:

Mexico — With 85 million people, Mexico is stable enough to escape the curse of violence. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has instituted free-market policies designed to attack corruption and government bureaucracy. Growth is reported, but any U.S. recession could hurt Mexico. Political reform is being instituted slowly. Legislative elections in 1991 and a presidential election in 1994 are key tests.

Guatemala — An elected government has been unable to achieve reforms, blaming intransigence on the right. Critics blame the government as being weak while others see the absence of direct military rule as a positive sign.

The country remains the most sharply divided in the region, with an oligarchy of European descent ruling a population that is half Indian. Drug trafficking is on the rise.

El Salvador — The rebel offensive in November and the slaying of six Jesuit priests has led to a deterioration of the peace process. The government continues to receive massive U.S. aid. The rebels appear capable of surviving even without Nicaraguan or Cuban aid. Neither side appears interested in serious negotiations.

Honduras — President-elect Rafael Leonardo Callejas takes office in January, but may not

have much to do with solving Honduras' problems. The U.S.-backed contra rebel army is based in border areas, raising tensions with Nicaragua. Callejas hopes to attract investment with Salinas-style reforms, but fighting in El Salvador and Nicaragua may disrupt it.

Nicaragua — Elections are scheduled for Feb. 25, 1990. Despite a superior political organisation, President Daniel Ortega and his ruling Sandinistas face a tough opposition challenge. If victorious, the Sandinistas will retain control of the army. If the vote is scrapped, regional confrontation may flare.

The contras still based in camps near the Nicaraguan border will be hurt if U.S. aid is cut. War-related poverty, U.S. sanctions and poor management are beginning to rival Haiti's as the worst in the hemisphere.

Costa Rica — An oasis of political and economic stability, it is hampered by its location in a troubled hemisphere. President Oscar Arias leaves office in 1990 with a Nobel prize but no regional peace. Drug trafficking is on the rise.

Panama — Civilian rule has a chance now that the United States has given Noriega the boot, but the country's democratic tradition is not strong and a reconstituted military could be a danger. Good U.S.-Panama relations will become more important as Dec. 31, 1990, approaches — at noon on that day the United

States turns the Panama Canal over to full Panamanian authority.

Cuba — Although not part of Central America, Cuba is a strong regional player. President Fidel Castro is a dedicated revolutionary but may have to reduce aid to Nicaragua and El Salvador's rebels because of problems at home.

Increasingly isolated from the Communist world, Castro seems

determined to resist reform and has warned of a need for economic austerity.

That's not going over well with the younger generation. Bored with tales of a 30-year-old revolution, they look to well-off relatives in Miami and think about Rock 'n' Roll. Castro retains personal prestige, but increased dependence on his brother Raul is a sign of rigidity and a narrow power base.

U.S. wary as Cuba assumes prized U.N. Council seat

By George Gedda
Associated Press

last year over U.S. objections.

U.N. tradition holds that the election of a given country is automatic if it receives the endorsement by consensus of other countries from the same region.

The United States tried to encourage other hemispheric countries to oppose Cuba's candidacy.

Several tested the waters but dropped out, leaving Cuba uncontested.

On the other hand, the administration did block a movement in the Organisation of American States (OAS) in the fall to allow the Cuban government to reclaim its OAS seat. Cuba was expelled from the OAS in the early 1960s.

Gillian Gunn, an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said Cuba's image in the hemisphere was enhanced during the crucial period in the first half of 1989 when the issue of who would win the council seat was being decided.

In response to American criticism, Cuba contends that no country tramples on U.N. principles more relentlessly than the United States.

As Cuba sees it, the invasion of Panama is just the latest example of the U.S. interventionism. After the invasion, there were large demonstrations in front of the American diplomatic mission in late 1988 and early 1989, Ms. Gunn said.

Cuba's accession to a Security Council seat is a bright spot in an otherwise bleak period for the island nation. Cuba had close ties with all of the governments in Eastern Europe that have been forced out in recent months.

Geographically, Cuba has never been more isolated.

The ouster of Panama's Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega was also seen as a loss for Cuba because the leaders of both countries had a shared hostility for the United States.

U.S. officials are particularly disappointed over Cuba's elevation to a council seat because other Latin American countries rallied behind Cuba's candidacy

and the symptoms of economic deterioration are so grave and complex that any responsible person has to be frightened," he said in an interview.

Finance Minister Mailson da Nobrega said the lame-duck government of President Jose Sarney can do little to check inflation except to ask businesses not to raise prices so fast. That measure has been ineffective in the past.

Upon taking office on March 15, Collor de Mello's first task will be to control the country's spiraling economic crisis. Inflation is more than 1,500 per cent a year and unions say real wages have been halved in the past year.

But many Brazilians hope that their first freely elected president since 1960 will be able to make immediate changes.

"One week after taking office, Collor de Mello will make our lives better, increasing salaries and not letting prices rise," Pedro Manoel do Rosario, a fish cleaner, predicted in an interview with the weekly newsmagazine *Veja*.

Helio Jaguaribe, one of the country's leading sociologists, said Collor de Mello will have only 90 days to take emergency measures and bring the economy under control. Otherwise, he said, Brazil faces chaos.

"Brazil is on the verge on a tremendous social explosion, and

cities," said Ophir Cavalcante, president of the Brazilian Bar Association. "Collor de Mello is going to face broad opposition."

That opposition could be crucial in Congress, where Collor de Mello's National Reconstruction Party has only 24 seats — just 3 per cent of the total.

Rep. Renato Calheiros, the president-elect's chief advisor, says Collor de Mello will overcome these obstacles by creating a "government of national unity that excludes no one."

But ill feeling from the election runs deep.

In the campaign's final days, Collor de Mello made vicious personal attacks on Lula and accused his Workers Party of wanting to impose a Communist dictatorship in Brazil.

"He'll have to be very macho," said Da Nobrega. "It will be hard, but he'll have to say 'no' to a lot of people."

Collor de Mello was elected on Dec. 17 over Socialist Luis Inacio Lula da Silva in a close race that sowed the seeds for substantial opposition to his presidency.

"Lula won overwhelming support from most unionists, professional organisations, the better educated, and rolled up big victories in state capitals and large

Mello's inauguration. "It's much more than a gesture of opposition. It's a rejection of Collor de Mello," he said.

Many fear the president-elect, who is known for his quick temper, could be unable to deal coolly with his opponents.

"Collor de Mello is completely unpredictable. He may be another Jango Quadros," said political scientist Professor David Fleischer, of the University of Brasilia. He was referring to Brazil's last freely elected president, who resigned in 1961 — citing "occult forces" — after seven months in office.

Other analysts are more optimistic.

"There's a good chance a sizable portion of the country's economic elite will back Collor de Mello," said Alexander Barros, director of the political risk firm Early Warning.

Barros said Collor de Mello could form a strong bloc in Congress with the backing of conservative parties.

Focus on people

Clapping for all

By Marwan M. Shabani

CLAPPING seems to be a favourite past-time in Jordan or so it seemed earlier this week. As over 1500 people jammed into the parliamentary building in Abdali last Saturday, Sunday and Monday the nation's democratic experiment seemed to be going in full swing.

Deputies both praised and railed the government of Mudar Badran in their more than often-long, drawn out and frequently boring speeches. While most of the over forty deputies who took to the parliamentary podium received unimpassioned attention from the audience, a few seemed to bring "the house down" with enthusiastic clapping which they aroused by their commentaries.

What was the most amazing phenomena of all was the "clapping trend." One young man attending the three day attraction was Samir Abu Adnan. This young man in his mid-twenties spent three days watching and listening to the parliament's deliberations and commentaries. He clapped vigorously to the speeches made by deputies Ahmad Aweidh, Abbadi, Thunay Hidawi, Issa Madanat, Leith Shbeilat, Abdul Majeed Abu Zant, Bassam Haddadin, Yacoub Qarash, Fakhri Kawar and finally the prime minister himself Mudar Badran.

Now anyone attending any of the three day sessions or following them in the local media will know that the above-mentioned are people without a common thought forum. Their political affiliations vary from the far left to the far right to theology. What Samir did in enthusiastically clapping for all of these speakers after genuinely enjoying their speeches is an indication of something. Furthermore, Samir was not alone. Many of the spectators who attended the parliament's commentary on the government's programmes reacted similar to Samir.

This week Samir Abu Adnan speaks to Focus on People about himself, why he clapped for whom, and in after-thought what as an "ordinary citizen" who did not vote in the Nov. 8 elections, he thinks it all means.

Samir is 24 years old, he has lived most of his life in Jordan's northern most city, Irbid. After graduating from a public high school and receiving a grade of 80 per cent in his tawjini examinations he opted to study journalism at the school of journalism at the University of Yarmouk. Subsequent to his graduation Samir, like all young Jordanians of his generation served in the armed forces for two years. He has been out of the army for a year and a half and he is still unemployed.

Although Samir's parents are not "rich" as he says, they have managed to support him till now. Although at 24, Samir has never earned a day's salary in his life, he seems confident that he will find the kind of work he wants, "something in my line of specialisation."

"Our main problem is that the journalists association in Jordan has not recognised our college, thus no newspaper or publication wants to hire us. First of all we can't find a job to just practice our craft as underclass because the association has not recognised our department and without experience no paper anywhere will hire us. If they don't want us to work on this field, why open the college?" he asks.

Samir's situation is one that many young and not so young people in Jordan are having to deal with on a daily basis.

At this point unemployment among young graduates seems to exist in Jordan because of some administrative bungles, social ethics which "forbids" people from doing just any old job, and a lack of planning and coordination on the part of the establishment, be it the ministry of education or the student and his parents.

"I am here because I have nothing else to do," said Samir, referring to this to his three day attendance of the parliamentary session. "If I were working I'd probably be here anyway covering the parliamentary news for some paper."

Samir and his fellow journalism graduates from Yarmouk were all attending the parliamentary session. It is important for them to keep up with "what is happening," just in case we do find work at least we will know what is going on," Samir says.

Samir thinks that Jordan's ongoing experiment with democracy is the most thrilling and exciting thing to happen to the country since he can remember. "I couldn't believe it, everyone said exactly what he pleased and the government sat and listened. Later, the prime minister gave his reply. It was all very civilised. I liked it. I was proud," Samir recalls.

"I know very well that a lot of the speakers did not have a lot in common with one another, except that they all made sharp criticism of past governments, officials and the current prime minister and his supposed dealing in the past. But that alone was something to clap about," Samir says.

His enthusiasm he says was "because, they were courageous to say what they did, no matter what. In the past a lot of people were not allowed to speak out against their own shadows. Now a known Communist, who spent eight years in jail because he was a Communist, is elected to parliament and makes a speech. He has not been forced to capitulate, he speaks his mind, he criticises, people clap, he takes his seat, at the end of the day he goes home and has dinner. He is a free man," Samir says.

This young man, who, although he has never been exposed to any form of harassment from officials because of outstanding political views, shows an innate sympathy for those who have.

"Some of the attacks made by the deputies were rather personal, I thought. It is like that even in the west. I always read about American politicians and the way the media scrutinises what they have for breakfast and what their birth signs are and what that shows about their character and so on. Sometimes that is a real waste of time, of course, but that is part of democracy, I guess."

Trying to understand the motivations behind what happened in the parliament earlier this week Samir says is relatively simple. "There is a saying that my grandmother taught me when I was young. It says that one should analyse a person's background, what he has experienced and then one knows exactly why he does what he does and how he does it," Samir explains.

He goes on to explain that if each of the deputies who did not give the government a vote of confidence is analysed like this then you will know why they chose to say no or abstained. Those who voted in favour of the government can be analysed in the same way," Samir concludes.

"It's 1990 and I'm glad I'm living at this time in history. Now if I could only find a job," says Samir with a sigh.

Jordan

Times

Tel: 657171-6



One-hundred million children will die in the 1990's

THE GOVERNMENTS of the developing world as a whole are now devoting half of their expenditures to debt servicing and military spending. These two essentially unproductive activities, says this year's State of the World's Children report from UNICEF, are now costing almost \$1 billion every day — or approximately \$400 a year for every family in the developing world.

Meanwhile, says the report, nearly 8,000 children are dying every single day because they have not been immunised; nearly 7,000 are dying every day from dehydration caused by diarrhoea, and approximately 6,000 are dying every day from pneumonia.

Making available today's low-cost solutions to all of these child health problems would cost approximately \$2.5 billion a year. "It is a great deal of money," says UNICEF, "It is as much as the Soviet Union has been spending on vodka. It is as much as U.S. companies have been spending on advertising cigarettes. It is as much as 10 per cent of the EEC's annual subsidy to its farmers. It is as much as 2 per cent of the developing world's military spending."

Achievements

Arguing that only high-level political commitment can put today's low-cost solutions into practice on the necessary scale, UNICEF has called for a World Summit for Children to be held in September, 1990, at the U.N. headquarters in New York. It would be the first time that Heads of state had met to discuss a major social issue. The Summit would also give a boost to the new Convention on the Rights of the Child, which UNICEF says should become "the standard below which any civilised nation, rich or poor, will be ashamed to fall."

It is time that the needs of children were given this kind of priority," says UNICEF's Executive Director James P. Grant. "Protecting the physical and mental development of children is the most important of all investments in the social and economic development of our societies. Doing what can now be done to achieve that goal is therefore an issue worthy of its place on the agenda of the world's political leaders, the world's press, and the world's public."

Outbreak of peace

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Achievements

Pointing out that military spending has been cut or frozen in the USA, the USSR, China, India, and Pakistan, and that there are now fewer wars being fought than at any time in the last 50 years, UNICEF's Executive Director James Grant believes that an outbreak of peace could represent an opportunity for the world's children. The sums involved are so huge — with the world's military spending now exceeding the combined incomes of half of humanity — that even a partial escape from today's levels of military spending could bring new vistas of human achievement suddenly nearer.

The moral argument for this

"new preoccupation" is an obvious one. "Every single one of the

40,000 children who die each day," says UNICEF, "was a child

who had a personality and a

potential, a family and a future.

And for every child who has died

today, several more are living on

with malnutrition and ill health,

unable to fulfil the mental and

physical potential with which they

were born."

But there is also a practical

argument. The long-term

consequences are well known, says

the State of the World's Children

report:

— malnutrition means poor

physical and mental growth, poor

performance at school and at

work, and the perpetuation of

poverty from one generation to

the next.

— high child death rates mean

high birth rates and rapid population

growth

— lack of education precludes

people from contributing fully to,

or benefiting fully from, the

development of their communi-

ties and their nations

— hopelessness and the denial of

opportunity erode self-respect and

sow the seeds of almost insoluble social problems for fu-

ture generations

— entrenched injustices, and the

parading of unattainable wealth

before the eyes of poverty, pro-

voke an instability and violence

which often take on a life of their

own

— deprivation precludes environ-

mental sensitivity, forcing mil-

lions to over-exploit their sur-

roundings in the name of sur-

vival."

For these practical and long-

term reasons, UNICEF con-

cludes that a major renewal of

effort to protect the lives and the

development of children would

be "the greatest long-term invest-

ment which the human race could

make in its future economic

prosperity, political stability, and

environmental integrity".

Beckett rewrote rules of drama

Reuters

PARIS — Samuel Beckett, the reclusive Irish playwright whose death was announced Tuesday, changed the shape of 20th-century theatre with tragicomic plays of brooding despair.

Beckett, 86, died of old age and respiratory problems in a Paris hospital last Friday afternoon and was buried in a closely-guarded cemetery at the Montparnasse cemetery.

The gaunt Irish protestant lived in Paris for more than half a century, writing plays that became ever shorter and contained little or no conventional action or plot.

His most famous play, "Waiting for Godot", about two tramps in a no-man's land of the spirit, influenced a generation of writers with its stark poetic pessimism and bleak humour.

First produced in 1953, it slowly brought Beckett fame that culminated in the award of the Nobel literature prize in 1969.

Before "Godot", he wrote novels of increasing introspection. Afterwards he worked mainly in the theatre.

Beckett's play is a synonym for a work of difficult brevity, a cry of pain from an almost bare stage. One, "breath", lasts only 35 seconds and consists of light and breathing.

"At the end of my work, there is nothing but dust," Beckett once said.

On his 80th birthday in 1986, universities and theatres around the world honoured Beckett with conferences, readings and special services devoted to his work.

Typically, Beckett attended none of them.

But despite his love of privacy and the pessimistic vision of his work, Beckett was said by friends to have a sharp sense of humour.

When actress Billie Whitelaw, famous for her parts in Beckett's plays for 20 years, told the playwright she had been invited to lecture on him to students in the United States but did not know what his work was about, he roared with laughter.

"Well, Billie," she quoted him as saying, "You can tell them the author doesn't know what the hell it's about either."

Beckett was born in Dublin of Protestant parents on April 13.

He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, lectured at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and later at Trinity College. He published his first book, a poem called "Whoroscope" in 1930.

He made his home in Paris in the late 1930s and came under the influence of Irish novelist James Joyce — author of "Ulysses" — for whom he carried out research.

Joyce's novels were wordy and lengthy, the total opposite of Beckett's mature work. Beckett was quoted by theatre critic Martin Esslin as saying: "Joyce was a synthesiser, trying to bring in as much as he could. I am an analyser, trying to leave out as much as I can."

In 1938, the year he published his novel "Murphy", Beckett was stabbed in the chest in a Paris street by a man who asked him for money. A young woman he had never met stopped to help him to hospital.

This started a relationship between Beckett and the woman, Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil, that led to their marrying secretly in Folkestone, England, in 1961.

During World War II, Beckett stayed in France and joined the resistance against the German occupation.

Beckett later began writing in French, translating his

Oman stresses private sector role

DUBAI (R) — Oman looks set to achieve a real 1990 budget deficit lower than projected but remains cautious due to notoriously volatile oil prices, and hopes to set a firmer basis for greater private-led growth in the future.

This year's budget, announced Monday, set a 1990 deficit of \$314 million riyals (\$815 million) with spending eight per cent higher at 1.75 billion (\$4.5 billion) and revenue at 1.43 billion (\$3.7 billion).

Oais Ibn Abdul Monim Al Zawawi said that for this same reason the real 1989 deficit would come out lower than the projected 407.6 million riyals (\$1.1 billion), but did not say by how much.

Omani ministers and officials in a series of reports for the coming year outlined their plans for a gradual reduction in the state's role in the economy.

The policy is similar to that in other Gulf Arab oil producing countries which have begun to see the dangers of continually leading growth through spending state incomes which rely almost exclusively on moves in world oil prices.

Cutting the state role may not be easy. State spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), which is the value of all goods and services produced in the economy, was 55 per cent

in 1988 and as high as 67 per cent in 1986, the year of Oman's biggest recorded deficit following the oil price collapse.

Commerce and Industry Minister Salem Ibn Abdullah Al Ghazali said government policy should encourage the private sector to participate more effectively in economic development.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Mohammed Ibn Abdal-Ibn Zaher Al Hinai said his sector would try to produce more food to cut down imports, and create jobs.

The sector is only four to five per cent of total gross domestic product, but growing quickly, especially in fisheries.

Senior central bank official Mohammad Abdul Aziz Kalmoor said monetary stability remained a cornerstone policy.

Oman's other main concern is holding off imported inflation due to its large imports of consumer and capital items.

"Imported inflation... is more difficult to contain," said Kalmoor in his report.

Economists say anti-inflation

measures in the European Community (EC), which is Oman's biggest trade partner, will help contain imported inflation.

But the recent rise in most EC currencies against the dollar could offset this by raising EC import prices in Oman, where the rival is effectively linked to the dollar.

Omani officials see import diversification as the answer to this particular dilemma.

Independent economists see a long-term improvement only through a greater private sector role in developing the manufacturing and processing sector to substitute imports.

Oman, however, is confident of a better future for its oil output in the next five years. Oil Minister Said Ibn Ahmad Al Shamari said Oman could reach 670,000 barrels per day oil output over the next five years from 600,000.

Oman's main oil problem is lack of major reserves. Shanfari said proven reserves now are 4.2 billion barrels and he was optimistic more would be found.



Salman Tarawneh

Income Tax Department collects

JD 51 million

MADABA (Petra + J.T.) — The

Income Tax Department Wednesday announced the opening of an office in Madaba city south of here to help speed up tax collection procedures.

The announcement coincided with another by the department

Director-General Salman Al

Tarawneh who said a total of JD

51.1 million in income tax were

collected in the past year, up

from JD 43.3 million in the previous year.

Tarawneh expected his department to collect JD 100 million in income tax during 1990. He based his prediction on the fact that major firms in Jordan, including the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, made considerable profits from last year's operations.

Since the start of the new year, teams of department officials have been involved in distributing forms to various businesses to be filled by the proprietors and returned to the department, giving particulars about income for tax deduction purposes.

According to Tarawneh, the department will maintain a policy of enabling taxpayers settle their dues for past years in instalments specially if they now face certain difficulties in raising sufficient funds.

Tarawneh noted that his teams were also conducting field surveys in different areas to explore businesses which have not yet settled their income tax.

To make such U.S. goods more competitive with those from

Gulf Arab countries prepare new drive for higher oil output

DUBAI (R) — On the eve of the launch of their latest pact to cut production to sustain prices, Gulf states were already jockeying for a bigger share of oil output in OPEC.

But the recent rise in most EC currencies against the dollar could offset this by raising EC import prices in Oman, where the rival is effectively linked to the dollar.

Omani officials see import diversification as the answer to this particular dilemma.

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Oman's main oil problem is lack of major reserves. Shanfari said proven reserves now are 4.2 billion barrels and he was optimistic more would be found.

estimates the Mideast share of world supply will grow to 34 per cent from 24 per cent now.

The five big Gulf states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Iran and Iraq — plan to capture the increase in world demand as they have two-thirds of the world's crude reserves. They are also investing heavily to boost output capacity.

But Gulf oil industry analysts said they expect Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia to show some production moderation.

The latest OPEC pact, setting a 22.1 million b/d output ceiling for the first half of 1990, came into effect Monday.

OPEC's total output was estimated around 23.6 million b/d in November and December was similar, oil sources in the Gulf said.

Saudi Arabia, which in December pumped around 5.5-5.6 million b/d, might lower output to around its 5.38 million quota level. But some oil analysts had doubts.

If the Saudis want to have an absolute 24.46 per cent share of real OPEC output, as distinct from the ceiling amount, they might leave their output where it is, one oil analyst said.

Iran and Iraq with equal 3.140 million b/d quotas were expected to pump around this level in January, the sources said.

Nigeria targets private sector

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria, turning to the private sector for key help, launched a three-year action plan Tuesday aimed at feeding its 100 million people and providing a new focus on social programmes.

"This plan marks the dawn of a new decade of hope to all Nigerians," said Budget and Planning Minister Alhaji Abubakar Ahamadi, giving details of the 1990-92 plan and the 1990 budget un-

veiled by President Ibrahim Babangida Monday.

He said it would become part of a long-term plan over the next 15 to 20 years to diversify the debt-burdened economy away from dependence on imports paid for in oil revenues.

The first three years are crucial because by October 1992 General

Babangida, who took power in a

coup in August 1985, has promised to hand over power in black Africa's richest country to elected civilians.

The 1990-92 rolling plan, to be reviewed annually, calls for total expenditure of 144.2 billion naira (\$19 billion).

The private sector, led by

Nigeria's oil and gas industry, is expected to contribute 50 billion (\$6.6 billion).

ian manufacturers about \$126 million last year.

But that was not the main reason for this kind of trade, according to Ralph Watkins, chief of the commission's miscellaneous branch.

"The same amount of imports would have come in, under some other classification," he said in an interview.

The first incentive for American manufacturers is to shift operations that use a lot of labour to countries with low wage rates, the report said. It noted that the average Mexican manufacturing worker earned the equivalent of \$1.26 an hour in 1984 and 95 U.S. cents in 1987. The average earnings of a U.S. worker in 1987 was \$9.91.

The biggest item processed in Mexico was auto parts and sub-assemblies, including wiring.

"Mexico's attractiveness relative to other countries as an assembly location for U.S. producers was reinforced by an increase in relative wage rates in competing countries such as Taiwan, (South) Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore," the report said.

It reported that in 1987 average earnings in Mexico were 50 per cent below those in Taiwan, 62 per cent lower in South Korea, 60 per cent below Hong Kong and 55 per cent below Singapore.

U.S. prefers foreign labour

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.

manufacturers send much more of their goods to Third World countries than do manufacturers in Western Europe, according to a report from the U.S. International Trade Commission.

To make such U.S. goods more competitive with those from

other countries, President Ronald Reagan's administration exempted them from a "user's fee" charged by the U.S. Customs Service. The value of goods brought into the United States under that exemption rose to \$74 billion in 1988, from \$69 billion in 1987.

The exemption saved Amer-

ican manufacturers about \$126 million last year.

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cent below those in Taiwan, 62

per cent lower in South Korea, 60 per cent below Hong Kong and 55 per cent below Singapore.

E. Germans abolish privileges

EAST BERLIN (R) — East Germany's Communist Party has served notice it was dismissing large numbers of staff, sweeping away special privileges and reorganising its entire structure because of an urgent need to economise.

In an interview published in the party newspaper Neues Deutschland, central committee member Lothar Bisky said senior communists would eat their own pay, give up private Western cars and end the personal use of official country houses.

The ruling Politburo would

lose its special dining room and eat in a canteen with other party members.

"We are simply forced... to think more economically," Bisky said. "This is an inevitable consequence of the division of party and state."

Since the fall of Stalinist leader

methods," Bisky said.

Their last task before being

dismissed would be to go to the

provinces to oversee the very

transformation of the party struc-

ture that was putting them out of

a job.

Bisky said top party officials,

including new leader Gregor

Gysi, would take a pay cut of

1,000 marks (\$200 at the official

rate) a month. He did not say

however what proportion of their

earnings this was.

Only top officials would now

be entitled to private cars from

the party, and these would be

modest Soviet-made Ladas rather

than the grandiose Western mod-

els of the old order.

He said large numbers of staff

who propped up the old party

structure had been dismissed,

without specifying how many.

"They have... nothing more in

common with the present party

apparatus, neither for their large

numbers nor in their working

conditions," Bisky said.

Members will also be allowed

to use Citroens, but only on

special occasions, for instance

when accompanying high-ranking

foreign guests," Bisky said.

Peanuts

BY CHARLES M. SCHULZ

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CHARLES M. SCHULZ

Becker full of confidence

SYDNEY: Australia (AP) — Big-hitting Boris Becker braved the midday sun Wednesday, taking to the practice court just 12 hours after jetting into Australia from Europe to begin preparing for the Australian Open.

Becker will play in the New South Wales Open at White City from Monday to prepare for the open, which begins Jan. 15 at the national tennis centre in Melboune.

His opponents in both tournaments include world number one Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia, who currently is preparing as a resort north of Sydney owned by his coach, Tony Roche.

Becker last month led West Germany to victory over Sweden in the Davis Cup final and said he was feeling confident about 1990. "I don't know what is going to happen in the future, but my aim

is to win as many matches as possible," the West German said Wednesday when asked about the possibility of taking the number one ranking from Lendl.

"If I play well then we will see.

Right now I feel good, although it is very hot today," Becker said.

Temperatures soared over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (57 degrees Celsius) Wednesday, but that didn't stop coach Bob Brett from giving Becker a vigorous workout.

"It will take a couple of days to get adjusted to the conditions and the courts, so for me the Sydney tournament is a good preparation," Becker said.

Becker was beaten in the fourth round of the Australian Open last year by Jonas Svensson of Sweden and said he was determined to make up for that loss this time around.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1990
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Early morning conditions can be disrupted by adopting a new attitude but you can expect to experience more delays and disappointments in the afternoon and evening.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) New ideas presented at home can make some family dreams come true. Try to be off on some jaunts today for more happiness with your attachment.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be with influential friends and hold back from associations with those who are greedy. Good time to decide what supplies you need for that home improvement.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Give a practically-minded acquaintance compliments for some good deed that person has done. Showing quiet affection for mate will bring much romantic happiness.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Make as many appointments for private conversations with good friends as you can; these will have fine results.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You need to stand on your own two feet in a business matter now and are capable of doing so. This is a day to use the utmost tact in dealing with a member of your family.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Information from a distance gives the answer to your business

concerns. An outside prominent associate can relieve some problems at your dwelling.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be off to new places with as many silent and video-walk friends as are possible. Use some money you and attachment have saved for some interesting journeys.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Put your own special gifts now into any financial projects. Show your attachment now that you are aware of your loved one's needs and put more life into the relationship.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Delays in business plans now give you a chance to perfect them. Show your affection for your mate now by some very practical gift or compliment.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) A brilliant friend has all sorts of good ideas to aid you with business and finances. Invite into your home only the persons you really like and enjoy.

AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 19) Don't give up on gaining support in business of an influential person; you can finally attain it. Use that vitality you now feel to please your mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You should in ideas for more success in money and practical duties. Home is now full of constructive activity and improvements.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OMAR SHARIF

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold: ♦K93 ♦J62 ♦83 ♦K93 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass?

What do you bid now? A.—For the moment, you have done all you can with your positive response. With no first-round control to show, be content with four spades. It is up to partner to make another move toward slam.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold: ♦74 ♦K982 ♦QAK3 ♦Q94 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Dbl?

What action do you take? A.—With 10 points you have enough to redouble. However, what do you intend doing if your left-hand opponent bids two clubs or two hearts and that gets passed back to you? To avoid that dilemma, bid one no trump now, which shows a good balanced hand—exactly what you have.

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold: ♦J82 ♦KQ95 ♦1052 ♦83 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass?

What action do you take? A.—You have the values for one forward-going bid, and you have taken it. To rebid two hearts, you should have a six-card suit since partner, who has already shown two suits, rates to be short in hearts.



Boris Becker

Can steroids make champions?

LONDON (AP) — Al Oerter says steroids are all in the mind. According to a British Broadcasting Corp. television programme being screened Wednesday, he may be right.

The BBC documentary says anabolic steroids may have a greater effect on the mind than the body of athletes trying to improve their performances.

The TV programme, titled "Qed: the steroid myth," presents evidence from the United States, Britain and Italy challenging the view that the physical effects of steroids can turn good athletes into world champions.

"The idea that steroids enhance performance may be another damaging myth," the programme concludes.

Oerter supports that theory.

The four-time Olympic discus champion said that when he made his comeback at age 40 in 1976, he was given a steroid prescription to help him over an injury.

Because he had high blood pressure, the programme lasted just two months during which time, Oerter said, there was no noticeable improvement in his performance.

Yet seven years later, "clean" of drugs at age 44, he had one of the best throws of his career, 237 feet (72.2 metres).

"It's not the stuff you are shooting into your system," Oerter says in the BBC programme. "It's all mental."

But the programme left unanswered a number of key questions, including whether Ben Johnson could have won the 100 metres at the Seoul Olympics without being on steroids.

Johnson, stripped of his Olympic gold medal after testing positive for steroids, later testified he had been on a steroid programme since 1981.

Whether the Canadian would have triumphed without the help of steroids "is something we may never know for sure," the programme says.

At a press briefing Tuesday, the programme's producer, Chris Thau, said the muscle-building powers attributed to steroids could help certain athletes at certain times.

What the 30-minute programme, which took 1½ years to make, was trying to do, he said, was show that the mental impact of taking steroids was equally effective.

"It was not my brief to appraise it from a moral standpoint," said Thau, a former Romanian hammer thrower. "But there is reason to believe that what is gained in strength is not necessarily matched by power.

"I know how compulsive the winning urge can be. But what interested me is what actually happened to people on steroids. It's not like taking a pill. Everything has to be right."

The programme cites an ex-

periment at the university of New Mexico at Albuquerque where, for nine weeks, a group of male athletes underwent tests.

They were injected with a variety of treatments, including steroids and placebos—substances that have no medical effect and are used merely as a testing device.

The study used a so-called "double blind" format, meaning that neither the athletes nor the people administering the treatments knew who was getting a placebo and who was getting steroids.

According to the university's Dr. Douglas Crist, there was "no statistical significant change in body fat" and "no statistical significant change in muscular power" among those who received steroids.

Nevertheless, the athletes reported that they felt stronger.

The conclusion, Crist said, was that, while body composition appeared to be unchanged, the perception athletes derived from the treatment... made them feel stronger."

David Jenkins, a San Diego-based Briton who was convicted a year ago of drug smuggling and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, said he took steroids because he was obsessed with taking part in the 1976 Montreal Olympics, but that they did not improve his performance.

The former European 400-metre champion, rated number one in the world in 1975, was interviewed in custody at Borum prison camp near Barstow, California.

"He failed while on drugs because his mind stopped him," Hemery said. "Drugs themselves do not make champions."

Horse-jumping show

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, and for the second successive year, the Queen Alia International Horse Jumping Championship will be held at the indoor riding school of the Arabian Horse Club. The event, which will take place on the afternoons of January 4 and 5 is sponsored by Hotel Jordan International.

This is the only international championship of its kind in the Arab World which is held indoors. Participants this year will include the Syrian national team and a rider from Saudi Arabia, by invitation of the Jordanian Equestrian Federation and the National Equestrian Committee.

This jumping championship is now established as one of the most important charity events organised by the Jordanian Equestrian Federation, and proceeds will be donated to the Jordan Handicapped Sports Federation.

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Lulua Spinning & Weaving Factory

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AMMAN BACCALAUREATE SCHOOL Invites applications for the following positions for August 1990

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— Deputy head, to take charge of the English medium programme (includes English language and other subjects taught in English)

— English teachers (grades 3-5), to teach English and other subjects in English.

Senior School (grades 6-12) — Teachers of:

— Arabic, to teach Ministry of Education programme, GCE and International Baccalaureate courses

— English language and literature — throughout Senior School, including IGCSE and IB courses

— History in English, for IGCSE and IB

— Geography in English — to introduce the subject for IGCSE and IB

Suitably qualified and experienced applicants may be considered for the position of Head of Social Studies

Bilingual or English-speaking teachers of:

— Mathematics, including IGCSE and IB

— Computing, including IGCSE and IB

— Craft, design and technology

— Head or deputy head of Science and Technology Department, to teach physics, chemistry or biology for IGCSE and IB and to run a department of 12 staff.

Whole School (KG — grade 12)

Head of Music Department — Familiarity with Western music is required and knowledge of Arabic music is an advantage. An energetic practical musician is required to lead the continuing development of class, instrumental and choral work, and possibly to introduce Music IGCSE.

Scholarship for Arabic teacher

The school is offering a scholarship for two years funded postgraduate study in Britain within the area of Arabic language and literature or Islamic studies. The successful applicant will be required to undertake limited teaching to 'A' level in English, and to teach for 2 years full time at ABS on return.

IGCSE — approximates to GCE 'O' level

IB (International Baccalaureate) — approximates to freshman/GCE 'A' level standard.

Application forms may be collected from the school, and should be returned by Sunday 7th January 1990.

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